

The Colfax House  
Pompton Falls  
Wayne Township, Passaic County, New Jersey

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Seymour Williams, A.I.A., District Officer  
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

The Colfax House  
Pompton Falls  
Wayne Township, Passaic County, New Jersey

Owner: Mr. and Mrs. Richard Colfax

Date of Erection: 1696 (?)

Architect:

Builder: Arent Schuyler

Present Condition: Very good

Number of Stories: Two

Materials of Construction: Foundation - stone

Exterior walls - brown sand-  
stone on all sides except the  
front of the main body and wing  
which is faced with brick in  
Flemish bond

Interior walls - plaster

Floors - random width

Roof - gambrel on main part of  
house; pitch on wing, wood  
shingles

Historical Data:

Arent Schuyler was the fourth son of Philip Schuyler who settled in Albany in 1650. He was born in 1662. The present owners, direct descendants of Arent Schuyler, claim that the house was built in 1696.

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Arent Schuyler received a grant from James II in 1680 covering a large section of territory in East New Jersey. There were no permanent settlements in what is now Passaic County until the close of the seventeenth century. The Pompton settlement, which was the second, was made about 1697 by Captain Arent Schuyler and Major Anthony Brockholst. Therefore, it would seem that the date 1696 is too early for the house. Marion Harland gives the date somewhat between 1701-1706.

The Pompton settlement was made by the two men named above and their associates Samuel Byrd, George Ryerson, John Meed, Samuel Berrie, and David and Hendrick Mandeville. These persons purchased from the twenty-four proprietors of East New Jersey 5,500 acres east of the Pompton River which comprised most of what we know now as Wayne Township. To perfect their title they had to purchase the Indian rights in this tract. Captain Arent Schuyler acted as their agent and purchased for them on June 16, 1695, with merchandise and wampum to the value of two hundred and fifty pounds, the Indian rights.

During the Revolution the house was occupied by Casparus Schuyler, a staunch patriot. Washington was a visitor to the Schuylers while the army was encamped at Totowa.

Casparus Schuyler had one child, a daughter Esther. She was courted by several members of Washington's staff, but finally became engaged to Lieutenant Colfax, to whom she was married at the close of the war.

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The structure since this time has been known as the Colfax House and is still in possession of the descendants of the Schuyler Colfax families.

From the architectural standpoint, the great double doorway of the front is interesting. There one will find a double Maltese cross, one of the few in this country. The dormers on the street front have been added quite recently. The front porch is not original; the rear porch and the dormers are probably original.

Bibliography:

Harland, Marion Some Colonial Homesteads and Their Stories New York, Putnams, 1897

Information from the Owners

Information from Dr. Rauchfuss

Field Book and Drawings of the Survey

Walter D. Rutt  
Supervising Historian

Approved:

Seymour A. Williams  
SEYMOUR WILLIAMS, A.I.A.  
District Officer

Reviewed Aug. 20, 1936 T.F.W.

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A D D E N D U M

There is some disagreement as to what member of the Schuyler family built the original unit of the house and just when it was built. Arent Schuyler got a deed from the Indians in 1695. In all probability Arent Schuyler did not move to Pompton until around 1702. He was at least living at Pompton when he made one of his wills in 1706. The property passed to his third son Philip. Philip's youngest son, Casparus S., later occupied the house. It appears on Erskine's map as Paulus S. evidently a misunderstanding on the part of the surveyors.

The house was built at three separate times. The north wing which is long consists of two units. The main part is a typical post-revolutionary war house. The front of all the units is brick while the rear and sides are stone. The main house was built probably after the Revolutionary War by William Colfax. Who the builders of the other two units are is a difficult question to answer. Since Arent Schuyler was in Pompton in 1702, he may have built one unit of the old wing giving it to Philip. If this is not so, Philip probably erected it in 1712.

## Bibliography:

Bailey, Rosalie Fellons Pre-Revolutionary Dutch Houses and Families in Northern New Jersey and Northern New York, New York, William Morrow and Company, 1936

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